

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Award-Winning Medicine Wheel Public Art Installation
Commemorates A Day Without Art/World AIDS Day on
December 1 at the Boston Center for the Arts, Cyclorama.
Exhibition from November 23, 2009 - December 2, 2009**

***Press Preview- November 24 4:30pm-6:00pm followed by
reception and talk with the artist Michael Dowling 6pm-
8pm***

Boston, MA- For the 18th consecutive year, artist and educator Michael Dowling commemorates World AIDS Day by mounting the evocative large-scale installation Medicine Wheel at the Boston Center for the Arts, Cyclorama, in Boston MA. Medicine Wheel is the largest recurring site-specific public art event in Boston, an annual 24-hour vigil of prayer, dance, song and ritual attended by thousands of individuals and artists each December 1, World AIDS Day/A Day Without Art. The exhibition opens November 23 and lasts through December 2. Medicine Wheel, a circle with no beginning or end, is a sacred ceremonial space honoring the connections of all life while providing a safe place to gather and reflect on AIDS and other losses in all our lives. Each year, Dowling involves thousands of people in creating Medicine Wheel. Carole Anne Meehan, previous Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, who has worked with Dowling on past Medicine Wheel installations, feels that "the quiet power of Medicine Wheel is how it transforms the art of remembrance. It rises up anew each year for those who gather to mourn and pay witness, enfolding them in its archetypal yet dynamic space that is energized with myriad approaches to healing and sharing." In 2006 Medicine Wheel was awarded Best Project in a Public Space by the Association Int'l des Critiques d'Art New England Chapter.

The Medicine Wheel installation opens on November 23 with Luminaria, a 22ft tall physical lantern made out of portraits of faces representing those that have been affected in the age of AIDS. Dowling comments, "I am often in the dark about what goes on in the community and I look for people to enlighten me. Luminaria is a collection of light that exists in all of us." The portraits that will hang from a grid are made from original wood-block engravings that are carved from images in photographs, which are sent by the public. Two thousand paper birds from the Paper Project will be suspended from the ceiling and will appear to take flight into the Luminaria. The Paper Project is made up of thoughts and prayers and it was produced with the help of thousands during last year's Medicine Wheel. The participatory portion of Medicine Wheel will begin with a procession that starts at 11:30pm on November 30 at Eliot Norton Park, located at the corner of Tremont Street and Charles Street South, and ends at the Cyclorama. Participants will carry 36 shrines and pedestals and process into the Cyclorama to begin the 24-hour vigil, which runs from midnight to midnight on December 1 for World AIDS Day. During the vigil, visitors are invited to leave offerings inside the shrines--personal objects, letters, pictures or other mementos. Artwork and performance from local artists include dance, song and poetry that will illuminate the wheel and mark every hour of the vigil.

The AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts (AAC) will again this year collaborate with Medicine Wheel to support the installation. Rebecca Haag, President and CEO of AAC, said: "World AIDS Day is an important time for awareness and for people to reflect on our losses and struggles of the past but it also gives us hope for a better future. Michael (Dowling) has once again looked at the

state of HIV/AIDS in our society and found a new and innovative way to shed light on the pandemic as well as offer a renewed sense of hope and power for those that experience this disease on a daily basis," Haag continued.

About Michael Dowling

Michael Dowling is founder and Artistic Director of Medicine Wheel Productions. Dowling is a Boston based artist and educator best known for his evocative large-scale art installations that include Medicine Wheel (1992-current), a project that commemorates World AIDS Day/A Day Without Art. Before focusing on public art installations, Dowling had a successful career as a landscape painter. The most direct expression of Dowling's mission with public art is to involve community and respond to their environment at that particular moment in time. Dowling was educated at Boston University (BFA, 1977, MFA 1979 in Painting), where he studied with Philip Guston and James Weeks. In 2010 Dowling will be teaching a studio class "Art as Threshold" at Brandeis University.

Past and current public art installations include:

No Man's Land (1996-current) in South Boston; Freshwater (1998-99) at the Danforth Museum of Art, Framingham; Tales of Transformation (2000) at Church of the Covenant, Boston; Conspire (2001) a collaboration with Laura Baring-Gould at the Institute for Contemporary Art in association with the National Historical Park; Sanctuary (2004) at the Fuller Museum of Art, Brockton; Elements (2005) at Pilgrim Church, Sherborn.

Upcoming commissions include:

The Brandeis University Project scheduled for Spring 2010 and The Tonnes: A Meeting of the Waters, scheduled for 2013 on the border region between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

About the Exhibition

Medicine Wheel is the largest recurring site-specific public art event in Boston with an 18-year history and an annual 24-hour vigil of prayer, dance, song and ritual attended by thousands of individuals and artists every December 1st for World AIDS Day. The Medicine Wheel installation is a Cyclorama Residency at the Boston Center for the Arts. Medicine Wheel is also a collaboration with the AIDS Action Committee of Boston, MA.

Press Preview

Tuesday, November 24 4:30pm-6pm with reception and artist talk immediately after from 6pm-8pm. Please RSVP to tflores@mwproductions.org

Hours

Monday, November 23 to Wednesday, December 2 9am-5pm

Wednesday, November 25 9am-noon

Thanksgiving Day Closed

Opening Night Reception and Artist Talk-- Tuesday November 24 6pm-8pm

Vigil-Doors open at Cyclorama on Thursday, November 30 at 10pm anticipating the 24-hour vigil.

Open for the full 24 hours on December 1 for World AIDS Day from midnight to midnight. Vigil begins with a procession at Eliot Norton Park at 11:30pm on November 30 and continues into Cyclorama.

More information about Medicine Wheel is available at www.mwproductions.org

About Medicine Wheel Productions

Medicine Wheel Productions (MWP) is an arts organization dedicated to the production of site-specific public art installations, both intimate and large-scaled, that invite people to use art as threshold, gaining awareness of self, community and the human condition. All programs and projects overlap and reinforce one another, emphasizing the transformative power of inclusive public art which gives voice to communities and artists. MWP operates a Studio School, a Gallery and a Retreat Program. The MWP Studio School teaches adult and youth art classes in Painting, Figure Drawing, Critique/Vision, and Site Specific Installation Art. The onsite MWP Gallery exhibits six shows a year that include works from its Artist in Residence program. MWP also leads five weeks of Artist Retreats annually to Italy, Ireland, Maine and Western Mass. MWP is located at 110 K St., Boston, MA 02127. 617-268-6700. www.mwproductions.org

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